

Kirkland Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC)

July 20, 2010

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Kirkland City Hall, Council Chambers

Present: Les Utley, Shirley Day, Jac Cooper, Ryan Noel, Dan Meyer, Luanne Erikson, Penny Sweet (Chair), Julie Huffman (staff), Ellen Miller-Wolfe (staff),

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 8am.

Review of the Agenda

Committee reviewed the agenda and accepted it with no additions.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were reviewed and a motion was made by Les, seconded by Jac. Motion approved.

LTAC GRANT DISCUSSION

Ellen Miller-Wolfe reviewed the summary sheet prepared by staff. The amount of funds requested greatly exceeds the amount previously set aside. Requests were spread out in terms of location, as well as season. Ellen Miller-Wolfe consulted the City Attorney regarding the inherent conflict in that members on the LTAC are representative of tourism interests so connected to a number of the grant proposals that are before them. Members need to exclude themselves from the discussion of dollar amounts for individual applications if they have a fiduciary connection to the event being discussed. However, members may participate in the final vote, and offer factual information. The LTAC's decisions will go to the City Council as a recommendation; it is the City Council who makes the final decision.

Process for determining criteria:

Chair Penny Sweet indicated that there are some events that LTAC would like to be associated with as an investment in advertising for the city. Other events that may have priority are those that truly need LTAC funding. Some events have demonstrated an ability to gather funds elsewhere. Finally, new events are likely to need the support and expand the tourism offerings of the City.

A question arose regarding whether the committee should view for-profit and not-for-profit events differently. Ellen reported that nothing in the current regulations indicates that nonprofits and for profits should be treated differently.

Questions of the Applicants:

Uncorked

Penny recused herself from discussion. The committee commented that each year Bold Hat works with the community as a partner to evaluate and improve the event. That collaboration is part of what the committee is looking for. It is also an established event with a large budget. Committee members are familiar with this event.

Concours

Penny will recuse herself as there is a wine garden included. Bill Vadino present in the audience to represent Concours. Bill described the event's growth, donations, national sponsorships, and efforts to extend the event to encourage overnight stays. Tour of several cities will end in Woodinville with wine tasting. Half of the tasting fees are donated.

KDA (Kirkland Downtown Association)

Bill Vadino also present on behalf of the KDA. Penny and Les will recuse themselves. KDA's visitor center allows people to navigate the city. KDA also brings people to Kirkland for events, mostly for daytrips. The KDA is asking for promotional money to increase daytrippers. That should lead to overnight stays.

Little League Junior Softball World Series

John Chadwick was present. He presented that the Series brings in teams from all over the world to stay in Kirkland, resulting in 500 room nights and food for teams. All events are in Kirkland. Families also stay in Kirkland. All the apparel and the website advertises Kirkland, WA. All games are webcast, and the championship is shown on ESPN. They hear many comments that people want to return to Kirkland for vacation. They book solid 2 hotels in the North end of the city, and the restaurants downtown are full. The teams do not pay a fee, so all the money has to be raised. This year sponsorships are difficult, so they rely on this LTAC funding. Clearwire is providing wireless to the park for the event. They also partner with Honda dealers to provide vans for each team.

Discussion: LTAC members noted that there was a significant need, the event creates overnight stays, and we need to be associated with them.

Comedy Festival

Dave Dennison represented Laughs. He reported that he just returned from the Montreal comedy festival. 2-5 million people attend the Montreal event. Their hope is that a similar Kirkland event can grow into a large draw, utilizing hotels and other venues in town. They would use venues downtown to showcase the waterfront. 30% of Laugh's audience is from out of town. The festival would utilize the grant funds for promotion. They will also be soliciting sponsorships as well. They are just getting started on sponsorships, and would like these funds to be used as leverage to raise additional funds. A question was asked regarding the budget. Dave clarified that big name headliners would be paid, but other comics come as an investment in their career. Another question arose of how they would bring the community into the event. They would find venues in downtown, the hotels, restaurants, and argosy cruise. They have also had fundraising events for charities. They would be willing to do that again with the festival. Or they could have one benefit show.

Discussion: There is no comedy festival in the area. The committee believes it would attract people from the region. Although there are several comedy clubs, there are no festivals as is being proposed.

12K's of Christmas

Garrett Slettebak present from Pro-motion Events to represent the 12k's of Christmas. They are in their 8th year and the event has grown each year. It is one of the top 10 biggest 12k's in the area. This is something to consider as a way for the city to focus on the athletic/health market. Would like the funding to be applied to promotion in OR, WA and BC.

Half Marathon

Garrett also represents the half marathon—this event is similar, also a large event. The benefit of the ½ marathon is that the start time is at 7am and on Mother's Day. The demographic is 69-70% female participants. This can be leveraged for gifting of mothers day weekends—either for race participants themselves to spend the weekend, or their spouses. They are looking for funding to publicize in Marathon Beyond—a national publication for marathoners who travel specifically for the event. They do partner with KAST to cross market, they have been doing that for 2 years. This is the first time they have applied for funding for the ½ marathon.

KAST

The application states that funding will be used for Locavore, a new event that expands on KAST. It is also a fundraiser. Les offered that KAC was trying to add a "local" flavor to add additional dimensions to the event. Staff will get additional information on the event for the next meeting.

Cultural Council FISHART Festival

Artilization is a committee of the Cultural Council and partner with the Kirkland Chamber of Commerce that focuses on use of the arts to activate and re-activate the downtown. The Cultural Council is trying to fill the empty storefronts. The new venture is FISHART sculptures frolicking along the waterfront to highlight the theme of the new logo. There have been similar events in other cities. The event brings many people to the area. Families will come of the artists and will likely stay in the area. The committee has a lot of experience to bring to the event. Typically businesses would sponsor a fish. This event is different in that unlikely to ask for sponsorships other than in-kind assistance. Instead will partner with the artists to decorate/design the fish and then divide the profits when the fish is auctioned between the artist and the Cultural Council. They are hoping the event will break even at first. They would like to regenerate the art scene downtown. Have many ideas about events—they want to engage the community in the arts again, to bring them into the galleries and support the artists. They hope the event will run for 6 months, so the fish will be displayed through all the other events and auctioned at Concours. Book, t-shirt sales, and other promotional materials are likely to come out of this. LTAC funds will be used for the purchasing of the fish. They would like to purchase 50 fish. Artilization committee is 15-20 people strong. Will also request sponsorships as well, including grants.

Discussion: Ellen clarified that none of the funds would go to City staffing of the Cultural Council, but strictly to the organization of the event. Any proceeds will go back into other events or artilization. Also verified that there is no restriction of funding City entities as long as it is an event. Cross marketing opportunities are extensive.

Kirkland Performance Center

Dan spoke representing KPC, noting that funding would support the brochure, which is widely distributed. They also do a lot through electronic marketing, but find there is still a need for direct mail marketing. It is also distributed through local businesses, and will be mailed this year to the to-be incorporated areas. This is the main marketing tool for the season. They print 30,000 brochures.

Carillon Point Outdoor Movie Nights

Megan Curfman present from Carillon Point. This is the first time they are asking for LTAC money. All proceeds (beyond cost of movie and signage) that are earned from the events go to Hopelink. They previously were able to get sponsorships to cover staffing costs. This year sponsorship is more difficult. The

event is promoted on their website, and through Hopelink. They would like to put it in 425. Last weekend was the first showing, and over 200 people attended.

Discussion: It is nice to have a kids event at night, as many of the hotels are family-friendly, but most of the activities in Kirkland at night are for adults only.

Classic Car Show

The committee discussed the Classic Car Show. Funds go to the KDA and the charities that Legends donate to.

A question came from the audience as to whether applicants were notified of the opportunity to speak at the LTAC meeting. They were notified of the meeting, and the agenda noted questions of applicants. Staff can reiterate that applicants are welcome at the next meeting.

Criterium

Ellen reported that the Criterium was willing to move to Juanita in order to have less impact on the downtown neighborhood. That was appreciated by the downtown residents.

Discussion: The application did not mention where they would be publicized.

Discussion

All applicants have been reviewed. Discussion ensued regarding process and criteria for determining grant amounts.

General consensus was that the following could be used to determine funding levels:

- an event's need for funding
- priority given to seeding new events
- funding established events would maintain the city's association with them
- tourism draw or impact is important

The Criterium and the Outdoor Movie Nights do not seem to be a tourism draw. LTAC could fund those at 500 dollars. Those events are also more likely to find other funding.

Tourism Program Budget Review for 2011-12

Julie Huffman described the small changes made in the budget, based on projections made for revenue for the next 2 years. She noted that a decrease in advertising and special projects were the main changes. Electronic advertising should allow us to have a similar impact for less money, and the creation and printing of new materials to match the new brand were the special projects that needed extra funding this year, so a decrease in the next two years should not significantly affect the program. Les moved to approve budget in current form, and approved by all.